

A Ride around the Southern Villages

This ride is a fairly flat 22.7 miles from The Plain back to the Eastern bypass, apart from the initial pull up Hinksey Hill.

Oxford to Sutton Courtenay

Starting at The Plain, ride along Iffley Road. Turn right down Daubeny Road (near the Magdalen Arms), left into Parker Street and right again onto Fairacres Road, and then along Meadow Lane to Donnington Bridge Road. Or, you can simply turn right at the traffic lights to Donnington Bridge Road. Use the two-way segregated cycle lane over the bridge unless you can see others coming in the opposite direction, in which case stick to the road to maintain distancing.

Turn left onto Canning Crescent and follow the cycle path onto Abingdon Road, past Redbridge Recycling Centre. Using the cycle track, make your way around the right-hand side of the roundabout towards Boars Hill and cycle up Hinksey Hill, taking the right turn at the top towards Boars Hill.

Turn left onto Bayworth Lane, follow the road right at Bayworth and take the left fork out of the village. Turn right at the T junction and ride towards Sunningwell, turning left onto a track and past a gate onto Pen Lane (the road turns right and goes sharply downhill).

You can follow Pen Lane right into Abingdon, taking the right fork over the A34, and taking care to watch out for other cyclists and walkers. Note that there is a narrow section bounded by hedges after the A34 crossing, with few opportunities for escape. The route carries on through the suburbs and is fairly easy to follow, though it's not a Sustrans route. You'll emerge onto Oxford Road eventually, turning right and riding into town.

At the Vineyard, turn left into Abbey Close, keep right and make your way under the arch through to the marketplace.

Cross the marketplace and cycle down East St Helen's Street to St Helen's Wharf and along the river on Wilsham Road. Keep straight on through suburban housing to Peep-o-Day Lane. Continue along Peep-o-Day Lane, enjoying the (hopefully) wider and smoother surface until it ends at a T-junction with the B4016. Continue into Sutton Courtenay and along Church Street (i.e. ignore the right turn into High Street). You may wish to take a break on the lovely Green.

Sutton Courtenay to Oxford

Head out of Sutton Courtenay towards Appleford. Follow the road round the left-hand corner (by the level crossing). About 0.3 mile after the corner, the Moor Ditch cycle path crosses the road. Turn left down Moor Ditch and continue to Long Wittenham. Moor Ditch is a good path; it's narrow in places but there are plenty of escape routes to the side. Carry on through Long Wittenham and on to Clifton Hampden. Turn right and almost immediately left at the lights onto the B4015 Oxford Road.

Turn left at the roundabout onto the A4074, towards Nuneham Courtenay and then right after the Arboretum, towards the Baldons. Cycle through both villages, joining the B480 Watlington Road, turn left and cycle into Oxford, arriving at the Eastern Bypass, Garsington Road roundabout.

Alternative return route

There is another, shorter, route home, but I don't recommend it, because the A415 stretch between Culham and Clifton Hampden is very dull. There is a path alongside the carriageway, but as with most such paths, it does not allow for social distancing at present. If you want to take this route, ride (back) up Abingdon Road, near The Fish at Sutton Courtenay. This becomes Tollgate Road. Follow this to the A415, turn right at the T-junction and carry on until Clifton Hampden, where you turn left onto the B4015. The rest of the route is as above.

Important Note

The A415, A4074 and the B480 are **fast roads** and normally not great to cycle along. **It is extremely important to wear hi-vis clothing and not to take any risks.** The only really unpleasant section is the A4074 into Nuneham Courtenay, which is not very long. Your nerves are then calmed by the gorgeous ride through the Baldons. Look out for the peacocks as you pass the Arboretum.

Link: <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/34339590>